

Defining qualities of the worst managers

By [Maren Hogan](#) on May 20th, 2014

Here's a wake up call: [75% of employees](#) who leave their jobs are actually quitting their boss or manager. This is a case of "it's not them, it's you." It may be easy to point the finger and assume that you aren't the issue, but the truth is that with numbers like that, there's room for improvement across the board.

The truth is that most managers want to be good at their jobs, they want to be effective leaders, but they are oblivious to what they're doing that turns employees off. Want to know why your bright-eyed, go-getter employees are heading toward the nearest exit? Here are six ways your management could be failing.

1. Your mood shifts with the tides

You are human, so it's OK to have bad days. Employees can forgive a [manager's ill mood](#) here and there, but making a habit of unpredictable swings will only make you more unapproachable. I once had a boss that we called "The Bear"; most people assumed he earned this nickname due to his large stature. We actually called him that because you were never sure if you were getting a teddy bear or a grizzly bear from day to day. That guy was all over the place!

Part of being a leader is gaining the trust of those who are supposed to follow you. When an employee can't trust that you will be open to hearing positives and negatives of a project or situation, problems will fly under your radar or never be reported. If an employee never really knows what to expect, then communication, engagement and innovation will suffer.

Above all, learn humility. You are allowed to make mistakes, so be prepared to own up to them.

2. Helicopter manager

Much like the parent, a helicopter manager is one who micromanages the deliverables of an employee. While it's understood that a manager is to be included in big decisions, to expect everything to fly past your eyes is a waste of your time and the company's money.

Managers should be aware of what everyone is doing in the office without knowing all the intricate details. Employees are given tasks because they have the knowledge to handle them. At Red Branch Media, we adapted the [Directly Responsible Individual](#) concept. Establishing a DRI grants room for employees to work on projects while still holding one person accountable when things don't get done.

3. Office bully

Who would have guessed that intimidation and belittlement would have [negative effects on morale](#)? The professional world can be competitive. As people work their way to the top, attitudes and insults are often brought to the floor. Fear may work as a motivator for a little while but eventually, all it will inspire your employees to do is [change their occupation](#).

It is a manager's job to curb this type of issue and not be the one causing it. You will not like everyone you work with (that's life), but a manager should be aware that they were given their position in hopes that they were able to meet such challenges. Be the bigger person and set a positive example and standard.

4. Not friend, not parent — boss

One of the best arts of being in an office is building a sense of camaraderie and allowing that to fuel production. That said, there is a time and place when those friendships should stop and a professional relationship should begin.

A managerial staff should be pleasant with subordinates without allowing for easily misconstrued favoritism. The blurred friend/boss line can make for a difficult conversation when addressing problems or situations that are likely to come about. If there becomes a time that a manager is uncomfortable with speaking to an employee due to how close they are outside of work, business could be compromised elsewhere.

5. The Bill Lumbergh

Bill Lumbergh in “Office Space” wasn’t the first boss to expect work on the weekend “to play catch up,” and he probably won’t be the last. People are working more. A lot more. Like [11 hours more a week](#) than we did in the 1970s.

We’ve all worked with one or two Lumberghs who proceeded to send e-mails after work hours, on the weekend and expected immediate responses. It wasn’t fun. The time managers and employees are away from the office is important to health and productivity, so if you could go ahead and let a break be a break, [that’d be great.](#)
[Thaaanks.](#)

6. Your glass is never half-full

Employees make mistakes and when they do, it is a manager’s job to address and handle the problem appropriately. That can be hard for some managers (ahem, the Friend Boss), but when a higher up completely passes over wins, you have another issue.

No one wants to work for someone who never notices the good work that comes off of his or her desk. Engagement will take a massive hit if employees don’t believe they can do anything right from the start. Managers should be able to not only handle issues, but also [hand out earned compliments.](#)

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